

I know firsthand. I know what faith can mean in somebody's life. That's why I remind people, I'm just a humble sinner who sought redemption. And I—[*applause*].

Audience member. Preach, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, I don't want to get too far. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Well—[*laughter*].

The President. You know, we have a chance to show the world that out of the evil that was done on September the 11th can come incredible good. I believe that; I truly do. I believe that by being firm and tough when it comes to hunting down killers, that eventually we can help bring peace to the world. That is my goal. I want the children and their children's children to grow up in a peaceful world. And I think we can do that; I do.

And we can show the world the true face of America as well. Oh, it's a diverse face, no question about it, which is our strength, not our weakness. But it's a face that can be bound by common goals and common values. It's a face that can stand squarely in the face of evil by the collective acts of people doing good in America.

And that's what I heard today. The great hope of the country really isn't the Government. The great hope of the country lies in the hearts and souls of our people. You've showed it in this community. Ten years after civil unrest that made history, the community is rebuilding herself with great hope and great promise.

And that's an important lesson. It's an important lesson not only for other communities; it's an important lesson for our whole country, because out of the evil that was done on September the 11th can come incredible good. And it's happening.

So my job as the President is to rally—rally the spirit of the Nation, and to thank those who are integrally involved in helping people help themselves. I want to thank John again for such a kind invitation. I am so honored that you would invite me, a Texan—[*laughter*—to come right here to L.A. and to herald what is possible.

You know, we live in a great country—I mean, the greatest country on the face of the Earth. I'm proud of America. I'm proud

of our country. I'm proud of what we stand for. Oh, I know there's pockets of despair. That just means we've got to work harder. It means you can't quit. That means we've got to rout it out with love and compassion and decency. But this is the greatest country on the face of the Earth. And it is such an honor to be the President of such a great land.

Thank you all for coming today. May God bless you. May God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:01 p.m. in the Media Center at the First African Methodist Episcopal Renaissance Center. In his remarks, he referred to John Bryant, founder, chairman of the board, and chief executive officer, Operation HOPE, Inc.; Juanita Smith, Mr. Bryant's mother; Rev. Cecil L. Murray, senior minister, First African Methodist Episcopal Church of Los Angeles; John W. Mack, president, Los Angeles Urban League; Charles Kim, executive director, Korean American Coalition, Los Angeles; Antonia Hernandez, president and general counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund; Mayor James K. Hahn of Los Angeles; and Lou Dantzler, president and chief executive officer, Challengers Boys & Girls Club.

Remarks at a Dinner for Gubernatorial Candidate Bill Simon in Los Angeles

April 29, 2002

Thank you all very much. It is a high honor to be back in the great State of California. I am honored to be speaking in front of so many folks who are here for a common purpose, and that is to see to it that this good man, Bill Simon, becomes the next Governor of the State of California.

I want to thank Bill and Cindy. Flying in on Air Force One today, we had a good chance to visit, to talk about our families, to talk about our shared values. And after our conversation, it was quite clear to me that both he and I married above ourselves. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Cindy Simon for her willingness to join Bill in this fantastic journey to become the State's next Governor. It takes a very strong wife and a good partner to be willing to make this sacrifice.

I know firsthand, because I've got a great wife. The country is beginning to see why

I asked Laura to marry me. She's calm, and she's steady; she's strong. A lot of people are still wondering why she said yes. *[Laughter]* But I'm sorry she's not with us tonight. She's back in Washington, DC. But I am really proud of the First Lady of the United States.

I want to thank members of the congressional delegation who are here, Congressmen Rohrabacher, Issa, and Miller. I want to thank them for their friendship, and I want to thank them for joining in helping pass an agenda that is positive for all Americans. I want to thank Bill Jones—California's secretary of state is here as well. I'm not sure if Bruce McPherson's here, the Lieutenant Governor candidate, but he's a fine guy. And I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here as well.

And I want to thank you all for supporting this good man. I want to thank you for the friendship you've given him, for the contributions you make, and for your willingness to do more than just contribute, the willingness to go out and talk him up and to tell your friends and neighbors. As we say in Texas, it's coffeeshop chatter that helps somebody get elected.

I want to thank all of you who are here who are involved in grassroots politics in California. I want to thank you for your making the phone calls, for licking the envelopes, for doing all the hard work necessary to see to it that candidates can win elections.

This is a good man I'm campaigning for and a good man you're supporting. He's a fellow who's got his values straight. He's an entrepreneur with a generous heart. He loves his family, and he loves his country.

I've been reading about what some of the comments have been here in California. Some of the Democrats are saying, "This is a fellow who's never held elective office. Heck, all he's been is a successful businessman. *[Laughter]* What can he possibly know about running any organization?" *[Laughter]* Sounds familiar. Sounds like Ann Richards is advising the Davis campaign. *[Laughter]*

In 1994, the people of Texas voted for a positive vision for a great and diverse State. And that is exactly what's going to happen in the great State of California this November. This great and diverse State is going to vote for a breath of fresh air, a positive vision.

This State will reject old-style politics and elect as its Governor a man who is willing to lead, a man who doesn't need a poll or a focus group to tell him what to think, a man who will stand on principle, and a man who has got the courage to do what is right for the people of the State of California.

I appreciate so very much Bill's emphasis on education. As he mentioned, we just passed historic reform in Washington, DC. Let me tell you what the bill says. It says we believe every child can learn in America, and therefore, we expect high standards for every single child. The bill says that we trust the local people to make the right decisions for the children of California or Texas or any other State in the Union. The bill says that when we spend money, we expect results. And the bill says that when we confront—when we find failure, we must be courageous enough to confront it, for no child should be trapped in a school that refuses to teach and a school that refuses to change.

That is the philosophy of Bill Simon, a philosophy which will suit all the citizens of this State in good stead.

I appreciate Bill's understanding about the importance of energy for the State of California. It's hard to believe that our Nation has had no comprehensive energy plan for a long time. And as a result, the people of this State began to suffer. And so in Washington, we put together a plan that says, on the one hand, we've got to do a better job of conserving our scarce resources. And at the same time, we've got to use our vast technological know-how to develop renewable sources of energy. But it also says that for the sake of our economic security and for the sake of our national security, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of crude oil.

Bill and I know that we've got to be wise about how we explore for oil and gas in our own country. And we both believe that through technology, we can do so in an environmentally friendly way. But it's time for this State to have leadership when it comes to energy. In order for people to be able to find work, this State needs to have a Governor who understands the need to have a comprehensive energy plan, and Bill Simon is that man.

I appreciate Bill's understanding of the need to have fiscal discipline in our seats of government. And at the same time, he understands that the money we're spending is not the Government's money. The money we spend, whether it be in Washington or Sacramento, is the people's money.

I remember campaigning right here in this room, and I said if I was fortunate enough to become the President, I would go to Washington, DC, and insist that we return some of the people's money back to them. For the good of the entrepreneurial spirit in America, we let them keep more money. For the good of small business growth, people should keep more money. For the good of encouraging people to be able to realize their dreams, they ought to be able to keep more of their hard-earned dollars. And fortunately, Congress listened, and the tax cut we passed came at the exact right time.

I heard some of them talking up there about, "Well, you know, we need to raise taxes," or "We've got to stop the tax relief." They're reading the wrong textbook, as far as I'm concerned. I don't know what course they took, but what America should not do is, in the face of economic difficulties, raise the taxes on the people. What America must do is trust people with their own money. And Bill Simon understands that as well as anybody who's running for office in America today.

He's a good man with a good agenda for everybody who lives in the State of California. When he wins, he's going to be the Governor of everybody. Doesn't matter whether somebody voted for him or not; this good man will represent the best interests of all the people of this important State.

We've got a lot on our agenda in Washington. We're talking about trade promotion authority, and that's incredibly important, to be able to open up markets. Listen, the State of California benefits when we trade. And I hope Congress finally gets me a trade promotion authority. I hope Congress finally gets me an energy bill. I hope Congress acts. But there's nothing more important than making sure we defend the homeland of the United States of America.

I have the high honor of walking in the Oval Office every morning that I'm in Wash-

ington. I'm an early morning guy, and I've got an interesting routine. I get up and get the First Lady a little coffee—[laughter]—sometimes I read the headlines of the newspapers—[laughter]—rarely do I read the editorial pages—[laughter]—in all due respect; take the dogs out. And Spot, the dog who is now 13, born to Millie at the White House when Mother and Dad were there, joins me in the Oval Office. Barney, the 1½-year-old Scottish terrier, is not allowed in. [Laughter] After all, we've got a beautiful new rug. [Laughter]

But I sit at this fantastic desk called the H.M.S. *Resolute* desk. It's a desk that Theodore Roosevelt had used and Franklin Roosevelt had used. President Kennedy used it. You might remember the picture of John-John Kennedy looking out from the door at the desk. And I sit there in this beautiful sanctuary of democracy and read a threat assessment. Every morning, I see a compilation of intelligence about what the enemies may or may not do. And it reminds me of the most solemn task I have, and that is to protect innocent Americans from further attack.

And make no mistake about it, the people we're dealing with are nothing but cold-blooded killers. I can't put it any more plainly, and we're going to deal with them as such.

You need to know our country is doing a heck of a lot better job of sharing intelligence. Anytime we get a whiff of somebody thinking about doing something to us, we react. We react within the confines of the United States Constitution, but we react. We chase down every single lead there is. There's great cooperation now—or better cooperation now between our CIA and the FBI and much better cooperation between the Federal Government and the State government and local authorities.

At the same time that we're chasing down every single lead, we're also making the homeland more secure. The budget I've submitted to Congress has got a significant increase in monies available for border security, for a response to bioterrorism, monies for our bold and brave first-responders, the police, the fire, and the EMS teams all across America. No, we're active, and we're serious. But the surest way to protect the homeland is to chase these killers down, one by one,

and bring them to justice. And that's exactly what we're going to do.

I oftentimes think about what was going through the minds of the Al Qaida killers. They must have taken a look at America and said, "This nation is so self-absorbed and so materialistic and so self-centered and so weak that all they would do would be to file a lawsuit." [Laughter] They were wrong. They have learned firsthand that when it comes to defending our freedoms, our Nation is strong, united, and resolved. And we're making good progress, thanks to a fantastic coalition of nations that heard the call, "Either you're with us, or you're with the terrorists." And a lot of nations have made the right choice.

And they also learned firsthand that when it comes to defending freedoms, we're plenty tough, because of a fantastic United States military. For those of you who have got relatives in the military, you thank them on behalf of a grateful Commander in Chief. And I thank you for supporting them.

I submitted a budget to the United States Congress that significantly increases our defense spending. I did so for two reasons: One, that any time we put a soldier in harm's way, he or she deserves the best training, the best equipment, the best possible pay; and secondly, I submitted a significant budget because I wanted the world and our coalition and the enemy to realize we're in this battle for the long pull. I don't have a calendar on my desk, that beautiful desk, that says, "By such-and-such a date, you will be finished." That's not how I think. I think that whatever it takes, no matter how long it takes, I will lead this Nation to defend freedom against terrorist killers.

But the spirit of this Nation is so strong and powerful, and the world has got to know and the youth of America must know that this great Nation doesn't seek revenge. There's no revenge in our heart. We seek justice. And when we rid—when we got rid of the most—one of the most barbaric regimes in the history of mankind, the Taliban, we didn't go to that country as conquerors; we went as liberators. I want you all to remember that for the first time, many young girls were able to go to school, thanks to the United States of America.

The first phase ended with the Taliban out. Oh, some of them are hiding in caves, but there's no cave dark enough to hide from the United States of America. The second phase is to make sure that Al Qaida can't bunch up anywhere else, that they can't use a weak country as a training base or a place to recruit or a place to operate—from which to operate. And we're making good progress there. When the United States stays strong and steady, the world looks for our leadership. And that's the way it's going to be.

So we're in this for the long pull, and America understands that. I can't tell you how grateful I am to be the President of a nation that is so united and so resolved and so strong and so willing to defend that which we hold dear to our hearts, our freedom.

You know, history has called our Nation into action. It's a unique moment. And we've responded mightily, and we will continue to respond, much to the chagrin of the enemy. If America goes to sleep, the rest of the world is in trouble. If we blink, the rest of the world will close their eyes. So we're not blinking, and we're not going to sleep.

This war against terror is bigger than one person or one organization. You've heard me talk about nations which harbor weapons of mass destruction. Let me repeat again: We owe it to our children and our children's—and our children's children to make sure that some of the worst nations in the world are never able to blackmail America and our friends and our allies with the worst kind of weapons.

It is essential that we remain strong. It's essential that we defend freedom. And as we do, out of this incredible evil done to America can come some really good things.

I truly believe that if we lead in a strong and resolute way, we can achieve peace in the world. My dream is for the world to be peaceful in parts—in regions where people have lost hope for peace. I believe we can achieve peace. I believe we can achieve peace in the Middle East. I believe we can achieve peace between India and Pakistan. I believe, by being constant and vigilant and tough against terror, we will achieve peace. And therefore, out of the evil done to us on September the 11th will come incredible good for the world.

And here at home, we have a chance to show the world what we're made out of. I mean, we're more than just a military. We're more than just an economic engine. We're a nation of incredibly compassionate and decent people. We are one nation, under God. We're a nation that believes no matter where you're raised or where you're from, no matter what your religion may be, you can succeed in America. And that's an important message for people around the world to continue to hear.

But we can do more than that. If you're interested in fighting evil, love your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. If you're interested in standing strong against those who attacked us, mentor a child. Go to your church or synagogue or mosque and rally good people to feed the homeless. There are pockets of despair in America, and we must deal with those pockets not only with money but with compassion and decency and love. The Boys and Girls Clubs or the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts or Big Brothers and Big Sisters are all part of this great fabric of America which shows our true compassion and kindness and decency.

Today I had the honor of going to south central Los Angeles, and I was in a room full of people from different religions and different races. But I was so proud to be in a room bound by one common dream, and that is to extend the hope of America through every neighborhood, not only in Los Angeles but all across America. No, out of this evil done to us is going to come some great good, because we're a great nation.

You know, I also believe that what happened to us on September the 11th is beginning to change our culture in America. The culture for years has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else." I see a different culture emerging. It's one that says, each of us are responsible for the decisions we make in life. Each of us are responsible for loving our children with all our heart and all our soul. There's a responsibility era. It says that if you're a citizen in America, you have a responsibility to help a neighbor in need. If you're running a corporation, you have a responsibility to be honest with your employees and your shareholders.

There's a new culture emerging. And perhaps it was best defined by what took place on Flight 93. On September the 11th, people were flying from one city to the next. They were told on the telephones that somebody was attacking America. They realized their plane had become a weapon. They told their loved ones on the phone that they loved them. They said a prayer. One guy said, "Let's roll," and they made the ultimate sacrifice. They drove the plane in the ground to save other people's lives. It's the ultimate act of personal responsibility.

In this country, people are beginning to realize that serving something greater than yourself in life is important. It's an important part of our society. And it's an important part of being a whole person. No, out of the evil done to America is going to come incredible good. And the reason why is because we are such a good nation.

People say they pray for me and my family, and for those of you who do, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. I want to tell you that it is an unimaginable honor to be the President of this great land. It is amazing feeling, to be able to represent the greatest people on the face of the Earth. I want to thank you for that honor. I want to thank you for supporting a good man to become the next Governor of the State of California.

May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. in the Los Angeles Ballroom at the Westin Century Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Ann Richards of Texas; and Gov. Gray Davis of California.

Remarks on Compassionate Conservatism in San Jose, California

April 30, 2002

Well, thank you very much for that warm welcome. I am so grateful for the Commonwealth Club and the Churchill Club for inviting me here. I appreciate you all coming, and I appreciate your hospitality. I want to thank Dr. Gloria Duffy for her generous introduction and for her invitation. I want to thank Silvia Fernandez, who's the president of the